

Partnership with Boy Scouts of America creates post for juveniles to explore potential careers

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“The various values, lessons and skills taught as part of the Boy Scout tradition have engaged thousands of youths across Indiana and empowered them to live as good citizens”

Commissioner J. David Donahue



Photo: Bob Wellinski

Derek Surowiec (right) Boy Scout Troop advisor and assistant advisor Josh Jeffers (left) lead the troop in Pledge of Allegiance Friday morning

MICHIGAN CITY -- A juvenile correctional center is probably the last place one might expect to find a Boy Scout, much less an entire troop.

The Camp Summit Juvenile Correction Facility in Michigan City, however, became a chartered member of the Boy Scouts of America last month.

Camp Summit is just one of the seven Indiana Department of Correction juvenile facilities to establish a Boy Scout troop.

The program is the result of a partnership between the department and the Boy Scouts of America to create more opportunities for youths in correctional centers throughout the state.

“The various values, lessons and skills taught as part of the Boy Scout tradition have engaged thousands of youths across Indiana and empowered them to live as good citizens,” Indiana Department of

Correction Commissioner J. David Donahue told the La Porte County Herald-Argus. “The youth in our facilities need the same values, lessons and activities to increase their opportunities for success.”

Beginning at the Pendleton and Indianapolis juvenile correction facilities in 2006, the program has since expanded to all Indiana male juvenile facilities.

Although the Camp Summit program is still in its “infancy stage,” an explorer post has been established at the La Porte City Police Department, Camp Summit Superintendent Mike Scott told The Herald-Argus.

Explorer posts allow teenagers to explore potential careers, and are an alternative approach to the traditional merit badge earning, which is also available to correctional facilities.

“We have an explorer post designed for 14-year-olds or older to help them develop a sense of what it’s like to work in law enforcement,” Scott said.

Eventually Scott would like to develop a complete list of professionals willing to come and speak to the troop about different vocations, but for now the goal is to develop core programming and get the boys acclimated.

While he is still brainstorming for the project with the facility’s juveniles, Scott has generally heard positive responses from his troop and local Boy Scout troops in the community.

Initial funding for the Camp Summit Boy Scout program has come from a \$500 donation from the American Legion offender organization located at the Indiana State Prison, said Kevin Moore, director of juvenile sources for the Indiana Department of Correction.

Another \$250 came from American Legion Post 130 and the United States Junior Chamber.

Programs at other facilities have received funding from local Boy Scout troops.

Boy Scouts of America has a process where members who move to different areas can join new troops.

Moore hopes that youths in the correctional centers opt to join troops when they are released.

“We want them to think, ‘What’s the Boy Scout model? What does it mean and how do we apply that to others?’” Moore said.

About the Department of Correction

The Department employs over 8,000 employees and houses 24,000 adult and juveniles in 32 facilities,

ranging from minimum to maximum custody, prison camps, juvenile facilities and work release centers. The Department's home page on the Internet can be found at: <http://www.in.gov/indcorrection>. The Department's Re-entry Site can be found: <http://www.reentry.in.gov>.